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Sabbath Keeping



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses the topic of Sabbath keeping in light of Jesus Christ's teachings and behavior. While the command to keep the Sabbath day holy was given to the Israelites later via the Ten Commandments, Jesus' actions suggest that the Sabbath law may not necessarily apply to Christians in the same way. Gregg argues that as Christians, our focus should be on the substance and fulfillment of Christ rather than shadows or mere silhouettes of religious practices from the old covenant.

Transcript

He rested, it says, in the seventh day, verse 2. He ended his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. Now, God did not rest because of exhaustion, because God is omnipotent. There's no exhausting His energy.

He doesn't get tired. So, resting for Him was not the same. He didn't do it for the same reason we rest.

We rest after a hard day's work because we have limits to our energy. We've used up a bunch of it. We need to replenish it.

We need to rest and recover so we can do some more. But God doesn't have to rest for those reasons. And I don't think we should think of God resting in those terms at all.

In fact, I dare say God was not inactive on the seventh day. Because, you know, I believe that God was probably doing activities of a different sort. In a sense, if not a sparrow falls to the ground except by the will of the Father, you know, He's got to make sure that He's keeping track of things.

And some would say even the planets are held in their courses by God's immediate involvement. Again, that's that question again. Did He make laws to do that or does He do that Himself moment by moment? But the point is this verse is not telling us whether or not God was inactive. It's telling us He rested or ceased from a certain activity.

He might have been doing something else and been resting from this particular activity, which is the act of creating. And it says it specifically, He rested from all His work which He had done. That is from the work of creating.

Now, as we know, the seventh day was later singled out by God as a day for people to rest as well. And that statement is made in verse 3. And it says, God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. Now, it says, and or then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

The word then can mean at that time or can simply mean at a later time. Then, I mean, it was after that. God may have blessed the seventh day right at that point.

That very day that He rested, He said, bless this day, you know, I sanctify this day. If so, however, we don't read of Him ever telling people to do anything different on the seventh day until much, much later. We don't have any evidence that God ever told Adam and Eve to rest every seventh day or to do anything in particular on the seventh day.

There's no instructions to Adam and Eve or to their descendants for thousands of years afterward. We have no evidence that the seventh day was observed by people just because God rested. Now, it says, God blessed it and sanctified it, but the word sanctified just means set it apart.

But when did He do that? Did He do it right at that moment? Or is Moses who wrote this saying something interpretive for the people He wrote it for, which were the Jews who came with Him or the people of Israel is a better way to put it, because they weren't Jews yet. But for the people of Israel who came out of Egypt with Him and were at Sinai with Him when He wrote this, if He wrote it there, that when He gave them the Ten Commandments and said to rest on the seventh day, He said it's because of this, because God sanctified this day and blessed it. Now, whether He blessed it and sanctified it at the point that we're mentioned here or whether Moses is writing this in retrospect saying, now, you guys know that we just received the Ten Commandments here at Mount Sinai.

And in one of them, the fourth commandment says we should rest on the seventh day. Well, God, therefore, has now blessed and sanctified that day. And the reason He did it is because of what He did back here.

Moses could be saying that here in verse 3 basically as His way of saying, this is why the day has been blessed because of what happened back here. It doesn't matter much. But the reason I bring that up is because there are people, of course, today who believe that the seventh day of the week must be observed by Christians as a special day.

And they point out Genesis 2, 3 as God blessed and sanctified the day back then. I'm not

100% sure that it's saying He blessed it back then, but He may have. It doesn't matter.

Whether He did back then or did later is inconsequential to the point of whether Christians need to observe the seventh day as a Sabbath. Because even if at that very time when Adam and Eve were just one day old, God blessed that day and sanctified it, we do not read that He gave any instructions to them about what to do differently on that day or that they were to treat the day separately at all. We have, however, at a later time, because of this event, because of this seventh day, God commanding His people Israel to rest on the seventh day also.

And you find that, of course, in the 20th chapter of Exodus when the Ten Commandments were first given. In Exodus 20, verses 8 through 11, the fourth commandment says, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work. You, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. And so that's why you're supposed to keep it.

Now, it says in verse 8, Remember the Sabbath. And some have felt that the use of the word remember means that this was not a new commandment to them. This is something they'd heard before.

Although this is the first time the commandment is given in writing, in the Scripture, it is thought that because God said, Remember it, that He's alluding to the fact that they had heard it and knew it previous to this. And therefore it is argued the Sabbath was kept before this time and was known this time and that God revealed it back probably in the days of Adam and Eve that people should rest on the seventh day. That is possible, but there's at least two other possibilities.

One is, there had been just four chapters earlier in Exodus 16, some instruction which is actually the very first mention of the Sabbath as an institution among men. When God told them that He was going to send manna every day for them to eat as they wandered in the wilderness, He told them to gather the manna on six days a week, but not on the seventh. It says in the 16th chapter of Exodus, in verse 22, And so it was on the sixth day that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one.

And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. Then he said to them, This is what the Lord has said. Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord.

Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil, and lay up for yourselves all

that remains to be kept until morning. And so they did. We don't have to read the whole story.

But the fact is that God referred to the seventh day as a Sabbath rest. Moses did here, four chapters before chapter 20. So it's possible when God said, Remember the Sabbath in chapter 20, remember back then when you were gathering manna, I told you not to gather it on the seventh day.

That's something to remember in terms of other activity as well. What I'm saying is the mention of remember doesn't mean that the keeping of Sabbath goes way, way, way back. It might not have gone back any further than when God told them not to gather manna on the seventh day, which was not really much earlier than He gave them the Ten Commandments.

That might have been the first time God ever gave any instructions. It's the earliest time that the Bible records God giving any instructions about resting on the seventh day. It was in chapter 16.

Now, another possibility, of course, is that when God said in Exodus 28, Remember the Sabbath, that even if it was a brand new law to them and they never heard of it before, He's saying, Don't forget this. Remember to do it. Not remember when I told you this before, but from this point on, I want you to bear it in mind and remember this and don't neglect it or forget it.

So there's really nothing in the statement, Remember the Sabbath, that proves the point of those that would say, Well, you know, the Sabbath was kept by people all the way back to Adam and Eve. We don't know that that's true. There's no evidence of it.

It may have been. We simply have no record. And one could not argue one way or the other about the permanence of the Sabbath keeping from that.

As a matter of fact, even if Adam and Eve did keep the Sabbath, and all godly people did from Adam and Eve on to Moses day and beyond, it still wouldn't tell us anything about whether the Sabbath remains an obligation for Christians in the New Testament, since it can also be argued that Adam and Eve offered animal sacrifices, or at least their children, Abel did and Noah did and Abraham did. I mean, animal sacrifices were offered before the law was given also, but that doesn't continue with us now. Likewise, circumcision was practiced by Abraham and all his kin long before Moses came along, but it was incorporated in law, but it doesn't continue now.

The fact that something may have been practiced before it was given to Moses does not tell us it must continue to be practiced after Moses' law has been fulfilled and gone, which it is now. The question of whether we need to keep the Sabbath today has got to be determined from the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself, and it can be. That is, the

question can be answered.

If you look over at Matthew chapter 12, we have two stories given in a row from the life of Jesus that have to do with Sabbath. Now, I'd like to just say that the Gospels record a great number of controversies between Jesus and the religious leaders of His day, the Pharisees. He was in controversy with them a lot.

It was not always about the Sabbath, but more often than not, it was. It was His favorite bone to pick with them was the Sabbath issue. It seems like Jesus sometimes would go out of His way to do something on the Sabbath that He could have done some other day, just to get them into dialogue with Him, just to get them offended, just so He could have an opportunity to correct them about their attitude about this.

Because we're in chapter 12, and the first 14 verses actually contain two stories on two different Sabbaths. Let me go ahead and read them. At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath.

And His disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat them. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath. Then He said to them, Have you not read what David did when he was hungry and those who were with him? How he entered the house of God and ate the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests.

Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless? But I say to you that one is in this place greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath.

Now, when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. This is actually according to Luke 6.6. This was the following Sabbath. Matthew doesn't indicate that, but Luke tells us this was the following Sabbath a week later.

He went into their synagogue, and behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? That they might accuse him. And he said to them, What man is there among you who has one sheep? And if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

And then he went ahead and healed the man. Now, these stories are real helpful, because Jesus in them tells us what the obligation of His followers is, with reference to the Sabbath. Now, His approach to the Sabbath might seem a little cavalier, might seem to be a little too libertine, because He was definitely breaking the Sabbath.

Now, you might say, Well, hang on here. Jesus wouldn't break the Sabbath, because He never sinned, and He kept the law, and so forth. But the Bible actually says He broke the Sabbath.

Not in this passage, but elsewhere, over in John chapter 5. Keep your finger here in Matthew, and look over at John 5. In John 5, Jesus healed the man who was at the pool of Bethesda, and it was the Sabbath. And the Jews accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath. And John, who wrote the story, agrees that Jesus broke the Sabbath.

Because it says, in verse 18, John 5, 18, Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, Okay? He broke the Sabbath. But also He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. So, according to John, Jesus broke the Sabbath, and that's not all He did.

He also made claims that offended them, and thought He made them think He was a blasphemer. But Jesus broke the Sabbath. Now, does that mean He sinned? Well, that depends on whether He's obligated to keep the Sabbath or not.

That's really the issue. Is the Sabbath law applicable to those who are under the rule of Christ, and to Christ Himself? Now, in the passage in Matthew, Jesus said, The Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath. Lord is the position of supreme authority.

Jesus is not under the Sabbath law, it is under Him. He is the Lord of it, not it the Lord of Him. Now, the two stories in Matthew 12 are really helpful.

Because, well, frankly, one reason there's so much controversy today, about whether Christians must keep the Sabbath, is because of a, what I consider to be, a misunderstanding of the role of the Ten Commandments, in the life of the believer. There's no question about the fact that God, in the Ten Commandments, ordained that people should not do any work on Saturday, the seventh day of the week. He specified the seventh day.

Saturday is the seventh day. And that is why Seventh-day Adventists, and other Seventh-day keeping people, other Sabbatarians, they push for this. They say, you know, it's not right to worship on Sunday, you've got to worship on Saturday, because that's the seventh day.

Well, they're right about one thing, Saturday is the seventh day. They're right that the only day in the Bible that was ever called a Sabbath is Saturday. The Bible never calls Sunday a Sabbath, or any other day, but Saturday.

Only Saturday in the Bible is called Sabbath. So, the real issue is, are we supposed to keep the Sabbath? If so, well, the only Sabbath known in the Bible is Saturday. My position is, that we are not obligated to keep the Sabbath.

But this bothers some people, because they say, well, wait, wait, wait, wait. The Sabbath is in the Ten Commandments. It's a command, it's the fourth commandment.

How can you say we don't have to keep the Sabbath when it's one of the Ten Commandments? Well, because the Bible doesn't anywhere say that I have to keep the Ten Commandments. As a matter of fact, the Ten Commandments were never given to any people except the Jews. And they were given to the Jews.

I shouldn't use the word Jews, because that's an anachronism. They weren't really called Jews until much later in their history. Better to say, the children of Israel, or the Israelites.

The Sabbath Commandment and the other Ten Commandments are only given to one nation, and that is the Israelites. And it was given to them on the occasion that God brought them out of Egypt and entered into a special covenant relationship with them, in which He likened to a marriage to the nation of Israel. And in that relationship, He said, here's what I require of you.

And He gave the Ten Commandments. Now, someone might object and say, well, Steve, are you suggesting that, you know, the commandments of thou shalt not murder, and thou shalt not commit adultery, and thou shalt not steal, and thou shalt not bear false witness, so we're not supposed to keep those? This doesn't have to be that confusing. The Christian's obligation is to obey Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Lord. That's what Christianity affirms. Jesus is Lord.

And Jesus said, why do you call me Lord? Lord, and you don't do the things I say. Did Jesus ever say anything forbidding murder? Yes. Did He ever condemn adultery? Absolutely.

How about stealing? How about dishonoring parents? How about blasphemy? Yes, He condemned all those things. In His teaching, He made it clear that we're not allowed to bear false witness, or to steal, or to commit adultery, and many other things. I mean, He taught a great deal about Christian morality and ethics.

As it turns out, once you take all that Jesus taught about behavior and obligations of Christians, you'll find that nine of the Ten Commandments happen to overlap what Jesus said. Now, Jesus went way beyond what the Ten Commandments say. He didn't just limit His teaching to those.

But what I'm saying is, once you take into consideration all that Jesus said we must do, you'll find that nine of the Ten Commandments happen to be covered in that body of teaching. That is, you cannot violate these nine without also violating what Jesus said. But what's interesting is, in all the recorded teaching of Jesus, He never indicated that He wanted His disciples to keep the Sabbath.

He never commanded it. He never implied it. He never hinted about it.

And in fact, He spent a lot of His time seemingly not keeping the Sabbath Himself. There are Sabbatarians who tell us, and I've been told this many times by Sabbath Adventists, they say, well, the reason I keep the Sabbath is because Jesus and the Apostles kept the Sabbath. I say, where'd you read that? I don't see it anywhere in the Bible that Jesus kept the Sabbath.

I read that He broke the Sabbath. I don't read that He kept it. There's no place in the Bible that ever says Jesus kept the Sabbath, and there's no place in the Bible that said Paul or the Apostles kept the Sabbath.

And they say, well, but the Bible, what, dozens of times says on the Sabbath day, Jesus went in the synagogue. And the Sabbath day, Paul went in the synagogue when he was traveling and preaching. True, he went in the synagogue, but what does that got to do with keeping the Sabbath? There's no law in the Bible that said you have to go in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

These meetings in the synagogues were never commanded in Scripture because the synagogues came into existence after the Old Testament Scriptures were essentially written. The synagogue was, except for the post-exilic books, there's a few of those, but there's no mention of the synagogues in the Old Testament, and there's no command that Jews had to get together in synagogues on the Sabbath. So going into a synagogue on the Sabbath is not keeping any Sabbath law.

What it is doing is an evangelist, Jesus in some cases, Paul in another, is going to preach to the Jews on the Sabbath where he can find the Jews. They'll be in their synagogues. They'll be assembled there.

Now, by the way, Jesus and Paul also preached to people every other day of the week. But on the Sabbath, the best place to find a Jewish audience was in the synagogue. And so they went there and they preached there until they got kicked out.

But to say that we read of them going on the Sabbath into the synagogue and preaching is not the same thing as saying that they kept the Sabbath any more than if I went to some place and found out that there was some kind of a public meeting every Wednesday night, sort of an open forum where anyone could say anything they wanted. And I decided on Wednesday to go to that forum and to preach the gospel there. No one could say, I'm keeping the traditions of that city by some moral obligation.

I'm just going there because that's where the people are. And that's what Paul and Jesus did on the Sabbath. Jesus plainly broke the Sabbath on various occasions because he said he had the right to.

He's the Lord of the Sabbath. And he seemed to get his disciples also had the right to do

so. And that's one thing that comes up in this story here.

It says that the disciples of Jesus and Jesus were walking through grain fields on the Sabbath. In Matthew 12, verse 1. His disciples were hungry. So they began to pluck some of the grain, rub it in their hands, which is they had to separate the grain from the chaff.

You don't want to eat the chaff. It's kind of hairy, unpleasant stuff. You don't eat that.

But they would take the head of grain. They'd rub it, let the wind blow the chaff away and let the grains kind of be separate. So they could just eat it that way.

That was technically considered harvesting and winnowing because to pluck grain that you're going to eat is harvesting. To separate the wheat from the chaff is winnowing. Now, of course, in the agricultural year, these things would be done on a much larger scale as a principal activity of an agrarian people is harvesting once a year their crops and then winnowing them so they can put them to use and put them in granaries and so forth.

Obviously, if you did this large scale, you'd be doing something that you couldn't do on the Sabbath, harvesting and winnowing. Some might say, well, to do it on such a small scale is not labor and that wouldn't necessarily break the Sabbath. But Jesus, when they said to him that his disciples were breaking the Sabbath, he did not say that they were not.

He simply said, this is not any different than when David ate the showbread. Now, did David break a law when he ate the showbread? Of course he did. No one ever said that David didn't break a law.

No one ever said that David was entitled to eat the showbread. He did violate a law when he ate the showbread, just like the disciples violated a law when they did this on the Sabbath. The point that Jesus is making is what my disciples are doing is parallel to what David did.

Now, both of them were hungry. David ate the showbread because he was hungry and he was going about the Lord's business. The disciples did what they did because they were hungry and they were going about their master's business.

Both cases involved the breaking of a law in order to satisfy their hunger. And Jesus did not say that they didn't break the Sabbath. Now, the people who would like us to believe that we have to keep the Sabbath would say, well, Jesus, you know, he defended his disciples because even though the Pharisees thought they broke the Sabbath, they really didn't.

The argument goes, what these disciples broke was the Pharisees' traditions about the

Sabbath, not the real command of God, because Jesus would never have supported them in breaking the command of God, the fourth commandment. So, all they were really doing was violating the traditions about the Sabbath that the Pharisees were offended by. And, I mean, my response is, well, he could have said so if that's what he meant, but he didn't say so.

There was another occasion in Matthew 15 when the Pharisees criticized the disciples for eating without washing their hands. And on that occasion, since eating without washing hands was not breaking any law of God, but was simply violating the traditions, Jesus said to the Pharisees, fool, well, you violate the Word of God to keep your traditions. And he basically said, my disciples don't have to wash their hands like you do because that's just a tradition of yours.

He didn't give that kind of argument here. He didn't say, it's okay for my disciples to do this because that's not really breaking the Sabbath, that's just breaking your traditions, which I don't care anything about. He could have said that, but his argument didn't go that direction at all.

His argument was, okay, fair enough. They broke the Sabbath. Don't you know that David broke the law when he was hungry? Why do you condemn them and not him? And he also gives the example of the priests.

He says in verse 5, have you not read, this is Matthew 12, 5, have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless? Now, profane, it sounds kind of strong to us. You have to realize that profaning the Sabbath just meant working on the Sabbath. The word profane means ordinary as opposed to sacred.

To the Jews, and rightly so, the Sabbath was a sacred day. The other days of the week were ordinary days. Now, to profane the Sabbath would be to treat like an ordinary day when it was sacred.

And so, what he's referring to is that the priests worked on the Sabbath too. In fact, offering sacrifices was what the priests did vocationally every day of the week. But they actually doubled some of their sacrifices on the Sabbath, especially the so-called the continual burnt offerings that was on an ordinary day, was one lamb in the morning, one lamb at night.

They did on the Sabbath two lambs in the morning and two lambs at night. They had double duty on the Sabbath there. Now, that would be technically, if any other person in any other vocation did that on the Sabbath, they'd be profaning it.

They'd be treating it like an ordinary day. They'd be ignoring or violating the sacredness of the day. But Jesus says, hey, the priests do that.

They do their job on the Sabbath, and yet they're guiltless, they're blameless. Now, he anticipated that his critics would have an answer to that. And they say, well, that's different because they're doing the work of the temple.

That kind of, you know, they're a special case because they're doing temple work. And so, Jesus said, ah, but one greater than the temple is here, me. And my disciples are doing my work.

If the priests can violate the Sabbath when they're doing temple work, then my disciples can violate the Sabbath when they're doing my work, because I'm the Lord even on the Sabbath. Now, what this means is that the Sabbath and the observance of the Sabbath becomes subordinated to the more important task of doing Christ's work. Now, what is Christ's work? If you think Christ's work means going on the mission field, or what a preacher does on Sunday morning, or what a person who's working for a Christian organization does for a job, that that's Christ's work.

And your work, that's just ordinary work. You go and, you know, you weld things together, or you deliver mail, or you run an Internet business, or you do something else, and you're not doing the Lord's work like some people are. Then you've got a different idea about it than I do, and then I think the New Testament teaches.

Every person who's a Christian is a disciple of Christ, commissioned to follow the Lord 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's what being a Christian is about. It's not like you give Jesus one day a week, and the rest of the day you're on your own to do what you want to do.

Whatever you do, you do unto the Lord, whether you eat or drink. You do all to the glory of God, it says in 1 Corinthians 10. And so, a Christian is not a person who devotes a day of the week to God, and the other six remain his to do what he wants.

The Christian is about his father's business all the time. If you happen to be delivering mail, and you're a Christian, you're delivering mail because that's what you believe Christ wants you to do. Christ has given you that job.

He's called you that job in some sense. He's called you to support your family, let us say, and maybe support other projects that God believes in as well. And the way he does that, he provides money for you through the things you do as a job.

Therefore, when you go to work, you're not doing your work, whereas the preacher is doing God's work. If you're a Christian, you're doing whatever Christ assigned you to do. And if that means welding things together, or running an internet business, or some other thing, whatever you're doing, if you're doing it unto the Lord, you're doing Christ's work.

In fact, if you're staying home with your family and cooking and taking care of kids,

that's also an assignment from Christ. That's doing Christ's work. Anything you do could be Christ's work unless you're doing something sinful.

You obviously can't run a porno shop for Christ. You can't do anything that's offensive to him, for him. But any number of lawful vocations that God may call a person to can be what they do for him.

They do it unto the Lord. They do it because that's where they believe God has led them to be, and that's where they're serving him. So, that being so, it's always lawful to do Christ's work, no matter what day of the week it is.

And that is, I believe, what verse 8 of Matthew 12 is saying, For the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath. Now, that word even, I think, is important, although some manuscripts leave it out. In Mark, I think it says, also of the Sabbath.

So, the point I'm about to make would work, whether it's the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath or also the Sabbath, it doesn't matter. The point is, by saying he's Lord even of the Sabbath or also the Sabbath, means he's obviously the Lord of the other days, but he's also the Lord of this day. He's obviously the Lord of Sunday through Friday, but he's also the Lord of the Sabbath, even the Sabbath.

So that the obligation I have six days a week is to do the will of my Lord, but that's my obligation on the seventh day as well. Doing what my Lord calls me to do is what I'm supposed to do any day, no matter what day of the week it is. He's the Lord even of that day.

Now, see, what Jesus seems to be answering there is what could have been a misconception people would have gotten. If they felt they had to keep the Sabbath, then they would have to feel like, well, okay, as long as it's not the Sabbath, you have to do whatever Jesus says. But if it's the Sabbath, even the words of Jesus have to be subordinated to that.

And that was the view of Jesus' critics. A man at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus said to him after he healed him, take up your bed and walk, take up your mat and go home. The guy picked up his mat, he was carrying a load on the Sabbath.

Not a heavy one, but it was still a violation. And the Jewish leader said, you're violating the Sabbath, you're carrying that mat there. And the guy said, well, the guy who healed me told me to do it.

Oh. What gives this guy the authority to tell you to do something that the Sabbaths forbid you to do? Well, they found out. Jesus does have the authority to tell you to do something that the Sabbath tells you not to do, because He's the Lord even of the Sabbath.

He's not just the Lord of the other days. He doesn't have to sit back and refrain from giving instructions on the Sabbath day that He would be wanting to give any other day. He gives the instructions He wants any day of the week.

And if it so pleases Him to tell you to work on Saturday, as well as on Tuesday through Friday or whatever, that's the Lord's business, that's the Lord's prerogative. And for you to do what your Lord says means you don't have to look at the calendar to see if it's any particular day of the week. You just do what the Lord says any day, even the Sabbath.

He's the Lord even of that day. Now, there's more, because the other story that comes up here is about the man with the withered hand in the synagogue, and this is another Sabbath, and Jesus healed the man, which also is a violation of Sabbath. Now, I personally think the only sense in which this act violated the Sabbath, I think it only violated the customs of the Jews about the Sabbath, because He did no work.

He just spoke, and the man was healed. Obviously, that's not doing any labor of any kind. But according to the traditions of the Jews, which are not binding, but still are relevant in terms of what they consider breaking Sabbath be, a physician could work cures on the Sabbath only if he was dealing with a life-threatening situation, and the person was likely to die before the next day.

If the guy was likely to live overnight, the physician was required to not heal on the Sabbath and wait till the next day. And, of course, the man at the Pool of Bethesda, he wasn't going to die. He'd been there 40 years.

Jesus could have come on Friday, or He could have come on Sunday, or any day of the week. He didn't have to do it on Saturday, but He chose to do it on Saturday. In that sense, He was healing, as a physician does, what was not an immediately life-threatening situation.

It was not an emergency, and yet it was a Sabbath. And it says, as we saw in John 5, 18, on that occasion, He broke the Sabbath. But here He healed a man also that was not in a life-threatening situation.

The guy had a withered hand. Well, he could have been healed the next day or the next year. For that matter, the guy might live a long time with a withered hand.

But the point is that Jesus indicated that healing the man with the withered hand was, in principle, not different than pulling a sheep that had fallen into a ditch out. If anything, the principle was more justifiable in the case of a man, because a man is worth more than a sheep. You would save the life of a sheep on the Sabbath, even though, technically, lifting a sheep out of a ditch is bearing a burden and is a violation of the command of the Sabbath.

But what Jesus is saying, every one of those critics of His would not object to breaking

the Sabbath when it was an emergency. Just like a physician could do a cure if it was an emergency. Well, you could lift your sheep on the Sabbath if it was an emergency.

Now, what He is saying is there are times when you show compassion to a sheep on the Sabbath. Why shouldn't you show compassion to a man, even if it's not an emergency, on the Sabbath? But the most important thing for our purposes, that Jesus said on that occasion, was in verse 12. After He said, how much more value then is a man than a sheep? He said, therefore, now notice this, therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

Now, that's a pretty broad statement. What is it lawful for us as Christians to do on the Sabbath? Good. It's lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

Oh, what am I supposed to do the other days of the week? Bad. Obviously, the Bible says that we are created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has foreordained before and that we should walk in them. It says that in Ephesians 2.10. Good works are what we are supposed to be involved in every day.

Now, Jesus said it's also lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Why? Because again, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. Our Lord has called us to be people full of good works, to do good things.

We are not allowed to do bad things on the Sabbath, but we are not allowed to do bad things on other days either. We are supposed to basically have a life that is seamlessly following Jesus Christ, doing the kinds of works that please Him, living a godly life, doing acts of mercy, doing acts of justice, doing things that are loving. We should do that all the time, and we don't have to look at our watch to see if it's after sundown Friday, and we can't do that again for another 24 hours.

I mean, this is what it's lawful to do on the Sabbath. It's good. Well, I would hope that every Christian, every serious Christian would say, well, that's what I'm committed to doing every day.

My commitment is every day I want to do good. I don't want to do anything that isn't good. Even eating can be good if it's done unto the glory of God.

I say even eating, not because eating would be thought bad, but eating doesn't seem to be morally good or bad, generally speaking. I mean, it seems like a neutral issue, but even that can be done to the glory of God, and therefore, if you eat to the glory of God, you're doing a good thing. And so, there's really nothing so mundane that it couldn't be done on the Sabbath, if that is the good thing to do.

If that is, in other words, the thing that would be considered good without reference to the day of the week. Pulling a lamb out of a ditch is a good thing, even on the Sabbath. So, the teaching of Jesus is that the Christian is a follower of His.

He is the Lord, and the Christian is His servant, and does the will of His Master, regardless of the day of the week. He doesn't have to pay attention to the day of the week, because He has one thing He's got to keep His eye on, and that's Jesus. And He's following Him.

And Jesus, when He was accused of violating the Sabbath, and had done so, in fact, when He healed the man on the Sabbath in John chapter 5, they said, why did you do that on the Sabbath? And His answer was, well, my Father works on the Sabbath, and I don't know how to do anything except I just follow Him. I'm not paying attention to anything but my Father. And my Father works, and so do I. The son doesn't know how to do anything except what his father shows him to do, and so the son watches his father and does the same thing his father does, He said.

And so, what Jesus is saying is, in my activities and my choice of things to do, I'm not paying attention to the calendar. I'm paying attention to my Father. My Father does these kinds of things seven days a week, and I'm His imitator.

I'm just like a son learns the father's trade from the father as an apprentice, so I'm just keeping my eye on what my father does and doing the same things. And if he works on the Sabbath, I work on the Sabbath. And the disciples are in that same relationship with Jesus.

I just see what Jesus does, and I'll do that the best I can, because that's my assignment. My assignment is not to keep a special day of the week holy. My assignment is to do what Jesus does, and to do it no matter what day of the week it is.

Now, of course, if this is true, then we would expect that the early Christians did not consider one day of the week as the mandatory day of the week to do anything in particular. And that is obviously the case as we read in the book of Acts, in chapter 2 and in the early chapters of Acts in general, after the day of Pentecost. The disciples met daily.

They didn't meet on Saturday merely, or Sunday merely, or any other day merely. They met every day. And what did they do? They had religious services.

They sat daily, it says in the closing verses of Acts 2, it says they sat daily under the apostles' teaching. They gathered for fellowship and breaking of bread and prayers every day. Now, that's not a command.

The Scripture doesn't say you have to meet and have religious meetings every day. But what we're saying is, what I'm saying is, they didn't wait until one day of the week to do that. I mean, if they did that three days a week, or four days a week, or two days a week, or one day a week, it makes no difference.

The point is, they didn't observe one day different. If someone wants to tell me that the

early Christians kept the Sabbath, and that was their day of worship, I say, well, what did they view these other six days that they were having the same kind of meetings on? Was that not a day of worship? Sabbatarians have often said to me, show me in the Bible where it says that God has lowered the Sabbath day to the level of all their days. And I say, the Bible doesn't say anywhere that God has lowered the Sabbath day to the level of other days.

I don't believe He did that. I don't believe the Sabbath day has been lowered one inch. I believe all the other six days have been elevated to the level of the Sabbath.

I believe that where the Jews were commanded to keep one day as a holy day, we're commanded to keep every day as a holy day. And as far as when we have meetings, there's no instruction about that in the Scripture. I mean, there's nothing that tells us how often or when or what day to have meetings.

Meetings are not what Christianity is about. Meetings are sort of a celebration. They're kind of a party that Christians do to get together and enjoy and to celebrate and to edify one another.

But Christianity is mostly about what happens outside of meetings. And it doesn't matter if you have a meeting every day or twice a week or once a week. It doesn't matter.

Christianity is not about meetings. Christianity is not about going to church, which is not, I don't say it in any sense to diminish the value or the pleasure or the advisability of going to church. I'm simply saying too often religion in America, in the modern world, is relegated to certain religious activities associated with certain religious meetings.

That's not how God views it. The way God views it is my religion happens when I see a poor person and I have that which I can help him with. My religion happens when I see someone in misery and I have the ability to help them.

My religion happens when I have the opportunity to encourage somebody or to, in some other sense, be like Christ to somebody, to do what Christ would do. Jesus, as you read the Gospels, the majority of what Jesus did was not done in meetings. Or if they were meetings, they were accidental meetings.

There are meetings where someone came up to him or a crowd heard he was there and they ran over and followed him and so forth. I mean, they weren't specially called meetings. We don't read of Jesus ever speaking at a specially called meeting except on the Sabbath when he went to the synagogue to preach there.

But he had meetings out in the hillsides and in the streets and places like that every day. But the main thing about Jesus is not about his meetings. He didn't organize his disciples into a group to have special meetings.

He organized his disciples to be a special kind of people who all the time imitated him and did what he did and followed his moral instructions and his instructions concerning proper worship of God, which, by the way, he did not indicate would take place in meetings particularly. The worship of God is our whole life. Everything we do, we do unto the Lord.

And therefore, when we have meetings, it's never made an issue in the Old or New Testament. It's true that the Old Testament has certain days, including Sabbaths and other special days, when God said the Jews should have a holy convocation, which means some kind of a religious gathering of some kind. But in the New Testament, we don't read of any particular holy days for such convocations.

In fact, when the Gentile Christians started, for some reason, observing such days for themselves, Paul was concerned about them. Look at Galatians chapter 4. Paul saw that the tendency to observe holy days of any kind was an alarming symptom in the possible backslidiness of his converts. He said in Galatians 4, of course, he's basically written a Galatian epistle to correct and to stem the tide of a legalistic tendency that was coming into the Gentile churches to keep the law, the law of Moses in particular, circumcision and the rest.

And he says to them, he's kind of rebuking them, in verse 10 he says, You observe days and months and seasons and years. I'm afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain. That is, as these Christians began to observe special festivals and days and weeks and so forth and years, he said, Man, I feel like you didn't hear me at all.

I feel like I labored to no end. I labored among you in vain. Didn't you get my message? Why are you observing these days and such? If you look over at Colossians chapter 2, just a couple of books later than Galatians, three books later, but Colossians chapter 2, verses 16 and 17, Paul said, Therefore, let no one judge you in food or in drink, which were of course very important parts of the Jewish law, as you don't eat certain things and you don't drink certain things.

Some things were clean and some were unclean. He says, Don't let anyone judge you about that stuff. Or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, all of which were like sacred days to the Jews.

Festivals happened once a year. New moons happened once a month. And Sabbaths happened once a week.

So you have a weekly, a monthly and an annual category of holy days. And Paul lists them all. The festivals, the annual, the new moons, which were monthly, and the Sabbaths, which were weekly.

Don't let anyone judge you about whether you keep these or not. It's not important, he

says, which things are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Or more literally, the body is of Christ.

Now, what he is saying is, Christ is the reality. These rules about sacred times and clean and unclean foods, he says, those things were all kind of temporary. And what they had to do with was, they were sort of a foreshadowing of a reality that has now come, and Christ is that reality.

Once the reality has come, you don't need the function and the service of those shadows anymore. They were there to sort of anticipate. There is nothing left to anticipate, and therefore they can be dismissed respectfully.

And you don't have to keep them anymore. You can, but there is no reason to. And it's possible that if you do, you might have such an attitude about it that it would even offend God, as Galatians 4 tells us.

I mean, Paul was concerned because the Galatians were starting to keep these as a religious obligation. Now, if you are a person who just finds a lot of richness in some of the Jewish festivals, as many Christians, for example, at Easter time, they like to conduct a Passover Seder. And sometimes they bring in a Christian Jew, or maybe even a non-Christian.

Now, probably, I guess of church, they would only bring in Christian Jews in most cases. But they conduct a traditional Seder, which is what the Jews do every year at Passover, what Jesus did. In all likelihood, the traditions of the Seder probably have not changed very much since the time of Christ.

And a lot of Christians find some value in that. They find something instructive about it, or something, I don't know, enriching about it. And I don't get too alarmed about that, though I've never attended such a Seder, because I see no need to.

But I don't say there is no value that could be gleaned from it. All I'm saying is, if a person begins to take on these Jewish festivals, and New Moons and Sabbaths, as understanding them to be an obligation for holiness, or an obligation for righteousness, I believe that's where they're making the mistake the Galatians were making. And they've suddenly misunderstood what righteousness is.

They've misunderstood who God is, and what He cares about. And that's why Paul was, I think, concerned about the Galatians. He says to the Colossians, don't let anyone judge you about these things.

Those things were a shadow. They were a teaching device. They were something to prepare people for something that was going to come.

And that has come. Now, before we get back to Genesis, let's look at one other New

Testament passage. This is in Romans 14.

In the opening verses of Romans 14, the first six particularly, Paul is addressing what appears to be a problem in the church in Rome. Now, the church in Rome, like many of the early churches, had some Jewish converts in there, and some Gentile converts. Apparently, a significant percentage of the Roman church was made up of Jewish converts.

But because Rome was a big metropolitan city, there were probably a lot of Gentile converts too. And the church had its factions. You can tell as you read through the book of Romans, there's much that Paul says to try to ease the tension between these two factions, the Jewish and the Gentile Christians, who were in the same church.

But it would appear that the Jewish Christians in the church might have been a little more attached to some of their Jewish traditions than the Gentile converts had any care to be. And so, we find that it would appear... He says some in the church. He doesn't identify them as the Jews, but it seems most likely it is the Jewish sector of the church.

Some like to observe rules of dietary cleanness or kosherness, and also to keep a holy day. Others don't want to or don't care to. Now, he doesn't say this is a particular rift between the Jew and the Gentile, but other places in Romans suggest that such tension existed between those ethnic groups in the church.

And it seems as natural as not that it was the Jews who wanted to keep the restrictions on the diet and to keep a special day. And the Gentiles probably didn't have any care to do so at all, not having been raised with these traditions. But he talks in the first four verses about these differences about eating, what you can eat and can't, and how the Christians in the church didn't all share the same opinion.

Then in verse 5 he says, One person, meaning one person in the church, esteems one day above another. Another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

Now, here Paul mentions there's a, I guess some kind of a controversy or at least a difference in practice among the Christians in the church. Some people are observing a special day. Others don't.

They just observe every day alike. Now, Paul probably wouldn't bring this up if there hadn't been some discussion among them and maybe even some strife among them as to this difference. In all likelihood, those who felt they must keep a holy day probably felt that everyone should keep one.

And those who didn't feel they had to probably were defensive about it and argued with them about that. And apparently there was some division. So, Paul wanted to give an answer.

Now, what's interesting is he didn't side with either camp. Here's some people in the church who want to keep a Sabbath day once a week. Here's some other people in the church who don't care to do so.

Paul could have as easily in this case as in any solved the dispute by coming down on the side of whichever one he agreed with. He could have said, Okay, you guys who aren't keeping the Sabbath, let me tell you, you need to keep the Sabbath. Or he could have said to those who were keeping it, let me tell you, you shouldn't keep the Sabbath.

Just go on, you know, keep everyday life. Instead, he said, Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Which means he gave the liberty to everyone to do what they felt they wanted to do and what they felt strongly they should do.

So that he didn't cause further division or hurt. He didn't offend the Jewish Christians if they wanted to keep Sabbath. He didn't say they had to stop doing so.

And those Gentiles who didn't want to, they didn't have to start. Now, very clearly, Paul gives liberty on this matter of keeping a holy day. Now, the Sabbatarians I've talked to often say, Well, it doesn't mention the Sabbath here.

It only mentions some people keep one day above another. And he's probably referring, they say, to other holy days other than the Lord's Sabbath. Because Paul couldn't give this kind of liberty about the Lord's Sabbath because that's in the Ten Commandments.

Therefore, Paul's probably talking about some of the other special days associated with the yearly festivals and things like that. And Paul's saying you don't have to keep those. But the burden of proof certainly rests on those who want to say that Paul is not thinking about the Sabbath.

Because he says, one group esteems one day above another. Certainly, Sabbatarians do that. The other group esteems every day alike.

Now, if a person esteems every day alike, they certainly aren't keeping the Sabbath. Because nobody who keeps the Sabbath could be said to be esteeming every day alike. Right? I mean, obviously, there's one day a week that they're not esteeming like the others.

So, whether Paul had in mind mostly other days than the Sabbath or not, we don't know. But certainly, the Sabbath has to also be part of this consideration. Because there were some people in the church who were clearly not keeping the Sabbath.

They were esteeming every day alike. And Paul said that's okay. They don't have to keep the Sabbath.

They don't have to keep one day above another. Some want to do it. Some don't.

Some feel like they should. Some feel like they don't have to. He said, let everyone just do whatever they prefer in this matter.

Whatever they're fully convinced of. Now, if the Sabbath was an obligation, then Paul could not be so cavalier about this difference. If the difference in the church had not been over this issue, but let's say over adultery.

If Paul said, now there's some of you in the church who believe you should abstain from adultery. Others in the church think that adultery is okay. Well, let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Paul couldn't do that. And he wouldn't. Paul, in many of his appeals, comes out strongly and fully condemns adultery and fornication and all other kinds of sin.

Paul would never have given that kind of liberty to each man's conscience if there were people in the church who were committing adultery. But there were people in the church who were not keeping the Sabbath. And it didn't alarm him.

It's obvious that in Paul's mind, keeping the Sabbath was not the same kind of an obligation as abstaining from adultery is. Yet, both are in the Ten Commandments. And if Paul thought that Christians must keep the Ten Commandments, then he would think it as important to keep the Sabbath as to keep the law forbidding adultery because they're both in the Ten Commandments.

It's clear that Paul did not consider the Ten Commandments to be the body of law that Christians have to obey. I said we'd get back to Genesis, but I've just changed my mind. Because I want to demonstrate this from Paul's teaching elsewhere.

Paul did not consider that the Ten Commandments were the law for the Christian. Let me show you this in Romans. Since we're already in Romans 14, let's go back to Romans 7. Romans 7, the first four verses.

Or do you not know, brethren, for I speak to those who know the law, he means the Jewish law, of course, that the law has dominion over man as long as he lives. For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

So then, if while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ that you may be married to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Now, what's he saying here? He talks about a woman's obligation to her husband. She's bound by the law to her husband. Now, it is not taken for granted as widely in the

modern church as it was in Paul's.

Paul didn't have to say this, but the implication was the woman has to obey her husband. She is under her husband's law. He is her head.

So, she has to submit to his authority. But if he dies, she doesn't have to submit to his authority. She is out from under that.

And if she marries another person, she is free to come under another man's authority instead of her first husband's. She can't be under the authority of two husbands at the same time. Why? Because Jesus said, no man can serve two masters.

A woman could not possibly fulfill obligations to two husbands simultaneously. And Paul said, only if her husband dies could she really legitimately be married to another man. Now, Paul compares that to us being married.

In the illustration, we are like the woman. We are like the wife. And we were married to the law, but that marriage has ended through death.

But now we are married to another. Christ. Christ who is raised from the dead.

When Christ died, we died with Him. And when He rose, we raised with Him. But Paul is making this point.

In the illustration about the woman and the husband, the husband dies. That's the only way she could enter into a second marriage. Because in natural life, if she dies, she's done.

You know, I mean, that won't work for the illustration. He can't say, everyone knows that if a wife dies, she is free to remarry. It's, you know, but he says, if the husband dies, she is free to remarry.

What he is saying is, a marriage can be put legitimately to an end by death. And the survivor can remarry. Now, our marriage to the law was our first marriage.

We have died to that though. We have died to the law through the body of Christ. So that that marriage has ended.

We are not under the authority of the law anymore. But this has happened so we can marry someone else. Christ.

What does that mean? We are under His authority now. He now gives the instructions. He is the one that we follow, not the law.

So, what Paul said is that our relationship to the law now that we have come to be in covenant with Christ, we are not in covenant with Mount Sinai anymore. We have, that

old marriage is not relevant to us. What is, is Christ.

And therefore, we must obey Christ as a present husband to us. We do not have to obey the law as a husband to us. That's gone.

That's dead. We are dead. We died to that.

It's over. That marriage is no longer intact. So, Paul very clearly believed that we don't have to obey the Jewish law.

But we do have to obey Christ. Now look over at 1 Corinthians 9. In 1 Corinthians 9, a fairly well-known passage, beginning at verse 19 and through 22. It says, For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all that I might win the more.

And to the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might win the Jews. To those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law. To those who are without law, as without law, not being without law toward God, but under the law toward Christ, that I might win those who are without law.

To the weak, I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now we can see that Paul's basic thought here is that he's flexible.

And he does all he can to conform to those sensitivities of the people he's around. So he doesn't have to... He doesn't want to put a barrier there for him to be able to reach them with the gospel. He doesn't want to offend them unnecessarily so as to give them an offense that would keep them from listening to his gospel message.

So he says, I'm flexible. When I'm with people who are under the law, I can do that. When I'm with people who are not under the law, I can do that too.

And I imagine the typical thing he has in mind is if he goes to someone's house to eat. In a Jewish home, they're going to serve only kosher food. That's fine.

Paul's not going to ask for, you know, a pork chop there. He'll live under the restrictions of their home. He doesn't want to offend them.

In a Gentile home, if they serve him a pork chop, he'll eat the pork chop. When I'm with those who are under the law, I live like one under the law. When I'm with those who are not under the law, I live like them.

Now, he doesn't want us to get the impression that if he goes into a Gentile home and the guy says, let's watch some pornographic movies, that, hey, I'm going to become all things, all men, I'll watch this pornography with you. No. Because he says this.

When he tells us in verse 21 that when he's with those who are without law, he can live

as if he's without law, but he says there's a limit to this. What's he saying? He says, not being without law toward God, but under the law to Christ, under the law of Christ. Now, he says, when I go into the home of a Gentile, I can live as if I have no obligation to the law.

That is the law of Moses. I'm still under the law of Christ. So, if they serve me food that under the law of Moses would be unkosher, I can eat it.

But if they try to tell me to do something that Jesus forbids me, I can't do that because I'm still under the law of Christ, no matter whether they are or not. I'm not infinitely flexible, in other words. I can be flexible about the law of Moses, but I can't be flexible about whether I'm obeying Jesus or not.

That's an obligation all the time. That's what he says there in verse 21. So, as I understand it, Paul believed that the Jews' relationship to the law or to God through the law was like a marriage.

Certainly, the Old Testament supports that notion. And our relationship to Christ is like a marriage. It's a covenant, like a marriage.

And therefore, the wife is not obligated to please or comply with the wishes of a husband that she used to have, who is now dead. But she is expected to do that toward her present husband. We are dead to the law.

We don't have to comply with the law. But we do have to comply with our husband. He that is raised from the dead even cries.

As we do that, as I live my life everyday thinking, what does Jesus want me to do? What are the commands of Christ? What do they say to me about my situation, about my obligation here, about what's the right and wrong thing here? If I ask those questions and follow them, I will in fact not commit murder because Christ would oppose that. I will not commit adultery. I will not steal.

I will not bear false witness. I will not covet. I won't blaspheme.

I won't have other gods before God because Jesus, in His teaching, condemned all of those moral infractions. But if I'm a follower of Christ, I might not keep the Sabbath because Christ didn't say anything about that. And the fact that the Sabbath law is found in the Ten Commandments doesn't mean anything because the Ten Commandments are not the law.

That's an old husband. The Ten Commandments are the law but they're not my law. The Ten Commandments are the law of Moses.

And that is the husband we've died to. We're not under that law. We're under the law of

Christ.

If you look at Matthew chapter 28, beginning at verse 18, Jesus came and spoke to His disciples and He said this, All authority... Now, authority is what you submit to. Authority is what you obey. All authority has been given to Me, Jesus, in heaven and on earth, leaving no authority for anyone else.

He has it all. All authority is given to Him. So, what does that translate into? Well, the obligation to obey.

If He's in authority, then those who are under His authority are supposed to obey Him. He says, Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations. Okay, because I am in authority, in absolute authority, He says, because all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me, you go and you make the nations become My disciples.

And you do that by baptizing them. Of course, that suggests they get converted. You preach the gospel to them.

They repent and they come into the church. You baptize them. Okay, now they're in.

And what else do you do? Verse 20, Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. That is, you make disciples by not just getting them in the church door and getting them baptized and getting them to fill a pew. You make disciples by instructing them, by teaching them, by training them.

To do what? Everything Jesus commanded. Everything who commanded? Everything Jesus commanded. Not everything Moses commanded.

Thank God. If we were to teach people to do everything Moses commanded, that would have to include animal sacrifices. That would have to include pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times a year.

That would have to include a whole bunch of stuff that can't even be done anymore. Because there's no temple there. And the commands of Moses required the altar and the temple and the priests and all that.

We don't have those anymore. We're not required to teach people to observe what Moses commanded. We're required to teach people to observe what Jesus commanded.

Therefore, we look at what Jesus said and that's what we do. We don't have to go back to the Ten Commandments and cross-reference with them. Now, am I opposed to the Ten Commandments? No.

As I said, nine of the ten actually overlap the teaching of Jesus. And that's fine. Obviously, I believe in the moral standards of the Ten Commandments.

But the Sabbath is not one of the moral commands. The Sabbath is a ceremonial law. And the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament apparently were fulfilled.

The dietary laws. Don't let anyone judge you about food, about drink, about festivals, new moons, Sabbath, all in the same bag. It's all ceremonial stuff.

When Jesus compared His disciples breaking Sabbath with David eating the showbread, what kind of a law was the showbread law? It was a ceremonial law. It had to do with the ceremony of keeping the tabernacle ritual. It wasn't a moral issue at base.

The ceremonial law of showbread was comparable to the ceremonial law of Sabbath. The Sabbath is a ceremonial law. According to Jesus and Paul.

I believe. So, the point here is following the Ten Commandments is not what we're commanded to do. What we're commanded to do is observe what Jesus said.

Jesus said elsewhere in John 8, You are my disciples if you do all things that I command you. If you keep my words, you are my disciples indeed. One other place I'd like to turn your attention to is in Matthew 17.

It says in Matthew 17, Now after six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, His brother, brought them up on a high mountain by themselves, and was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun. His clothes became as white as light.

And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared there to Him, talking with Him. Now Moses and Elijah, I think most would agree, represent the law and the prophets. Moses gave the law, and Elijah was viewed by the Jews as the prince of the prophets, the chief prophet of the Old Testament.

So the law and the prophets were basically the Old Testament authority in general. And here they meet with Jesus, conferring with Him. Then Peter entered and said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here.

If you wish, let us make here three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah. Now Peter was a good Jew. He had been raised under the teaching and the authority of the law and the prophets from childhood.

These were good things. They were given by God. This was God's religious system.

And now Jesus was added to it. Peter said, hey, we'll keep Moses, we'll keep Elijah, and we'll keep you. Three tabernacles.

We'll give them about equal footing. He probably thought he was flattering Jesus, saying, listen, we're going to give, of course, we've got to provide a place for Moses and Elijah. You know, they're the dignitaries that have just showed up here.

And Jesus, I'll tell you what, we'll give you a tabernacle just like theirs. We'll put you at the same level as them, which is a pretty high honor. Right, Jesus? You know, I mean, for you to be compared with Moses and Elijah, let's face it, we're giving you top honors here.

And it says, while He was still speaking, verse 5, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and suddenly a voice came out of the clouds saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased. Hear Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

But Jesus came and touched them and said, arise, do not be afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Moses and Elijah gone.

Jesus stayed. And the announcement from heaven was, this is the one who is my Son. I want you to hear Him.

Not to be hearing Moses and Elijah in the same sense as before. Now, that doesn't mean there's no value in studying the Law and the Prophets. There's plenty of value in it.

But the question is, who is it now that we're supposed to be hearing in the sense of hearkening to their authority and submitting to their authority? Christ. Moses and Elijah, they had their day. They did what they did.

They served God faithfully. In the Old Testament, the words of Moses and the Prophets are still edified and instructed, but they are not the authority in the life of the believer today. Christ is the authority.

The others have faded out of the picture and only Jesus remains as the leader of the Christian Church, of the body of Christ. So, again, when it comes to the question of the Sabbath keeping, we'd have to ask not, well, is the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments? That's not relevant to the question, I mean, what we need to know. What we need to know is, did Jesus say anything to us about keeping the Sabbath? He said, yeah.

It's lawful to do good on the Sabbath. And, of course, that's the same thing He wants to do the other day. So, He never put any restriction on behavior on the Sabbath.

And He did not seem to observe any restriction on His own behavior on the Sabbath. And as He did what He saw His Father do, including work on the Sabbath, His disciples do what they see Him do, which includes doing good on the Sabbath. So, that might seem like this was not a study in Genesis, but in light of the developments in Christian theology over the past 2,000 years since the New Testament was written, it's hard to read about the Sabbath in Genesis without having the questions arise that call for an answer.

Okay, God sanctified the seventh day. He rested on the seventh day because He finished creating. What does that mean to me? I mean, obviously, if we were under a Sabbath

obligation to keep the Sabbath, we'd be under obligation while teaching Genesis 2, 1-3 to say, and because He did this, we have to keep the Sabbath.

Since that is a foggy, hazy issue in the minds of modern Christians, I think it's important that we see what the later developments in the Word of God teach us about this seventh day because we first encounter it at the end of the creation week. But developments in the rest of Scripture related to that seventh day went through different phases, including the command of the Jews through the Old Testament law to observe it as a day of rest, and then the removing of that law, as it were, that obligation, when Christ came to preempt the law. Now, someone says, but Jesus said He didn't come to destroy the law.

He didn't destroy it. He said He came to fulfill it. A fulfillment preempts, just like a prophecy.

What about the prophecy that says the Messiah will suffer? Well, He fulfilled it, right? What does that do? It preempts it. We don't look at that prophecy as something that has to be fulfilled anymore. It's served its purpose.

It hasn't been destroyed. It's actually been confirmed. It's actually been strengthened by its confirmation, by its fulfillment.

But it's no longer something to be observed as something telling us about what we're to anticipate. And likewise, He fulfilled the laws that way. And we fulfill the law as we simply look to what He said as our obligation and do that.

So, the Sabbath is not really a live issue in terms of the ethics and obligations of Christians since Christ has come. It was a shadow. But He's the substance.

He's the body that casts the shadow. And shadows are great if that's the best you've got. If you tried to discern a famous person's profile from merely a silhouette, you'd be better off having the silhouette than having nothing.

But if you had the man's actual face there, if his body was present there, and you could see all his features clearly, you wouldn't care much about the silhouette. I mean, if you're trying to determine who is that over there. If you're looking at someone in a lighted room and you're outside in the dark and they've got a blind on, you can see their silhouette against the blind.

But that's all you can say, who is that they're talking to in there? You'd strain to make out the features in the silhouette. And you might even be able to figure it out because there'd be some information you'd be getting that way. But if you could just lift the blinds and see them straight on, you'd no longer care about the silhouette.

You'd say, let's go back and look at that silhouette again. You know, I mean, the body has come, who cares about the shadow? That's what Paul says in Colossians. And that's,

I believe, I think that's the last word that God had in the Bible about the Sabbath, where we found the first word in Genesis 2.